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Leaflet Regarding Rules of Publication.—CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE has prepared a leaflet explaining its rules regarding publication. This leaflet gives suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts and of illustrations. It is suggested that contributors to this Journal write to its office requesting a copy of this leaflet.

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EDITORIALS†

GREETINGS FOR THE NEW YEAR

In Retrospect.—At this writing, in the period between the two nowadays Thanksgivings, it is natural that thoughts should turn to blessings received; and on the eve of another Christmas and the advent of a New Year, it is also in order to express the felicitations of the season. These good wishes, then, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE extends to all.

It is gratifying to be able to report that the work of the Association has gone forward in excellent fashion; and particularly, that California Physicians' Service, sponsored by the California Medical Association, is on a self-sustaining basis.

In January, a new Congress will convene. To what extent legislation, partaking of the nature of state or socialized medicine, may be submitted, it is not possible to forecast. It may be assumed, however, that the proponents of certain measures, such as the Wagner Health Act, will not be backward in again advancing their claims for the enactment of that or a similar law.

In California, on the first Monday in January—the sixth day, by the way, of the month—the Legislature will convene. In recent statements, Governor Culbert L. Olson has furnished evidence he will again give vigorous support to proposed compulsory health legislation. Last year, in the Legislature, the threat of an initiative for such a law, to be placed on the November, 1940, ballot, was made; but the initiative did not appear. That, however, does not mean that the advocates will not be busy at Sacramento. In due time their proposals must be brought out into the open.

Medical Preparedness plans in California are being carried through in satisfactory manner. The medical profession may take pardonable pride in the willingness of its members to lay aside private practice, and to do their part in Medical Defense preparations. Yet it is important for all physicians, both men and women, to respond as promptly as possible when called on for needed information to make it possible that the best of professional service, and at all times, will be available not only in military activities but in civil practice.

All in all, the year 1940 seems approaching its end for the medical profession very satisfactorily.

† Editorials on subjects of scientific and clinical interest, contributed by members of the California Medical Association, are printed in the Editorial Comment column which follows.

The vantage positions gained should permit all to look forward with fair assurance of victory for all measures designed best to promote the conservation of health and life.

Again, from your OFFICIAL JOURNAL: Greetings and Good Wishes for the Christmas Season and the New Year!

ANNUAL REPORTS OF COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETIES IN THIS ISSUE

Value of Annual Reports from Component County Societies.—At a recent meeting of the Publication Committee of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL the conclusion was reached that an annual progress report by each of the forty component county units of the California Medical Association could be made of more value than the printing, month by month, of meeting minutes from a small number of county medical societies.

In this December issue, therefore, the plan of a progress survey is having its initial try-out, and the attention of members is called thereto; officers and members of program committees being particularly requested to scan the reports. (See page 290.)

In this connection it is gratifying to note from letters received that some of the county societies are alert, not in a few, but in all their responsibilities. The reports are worthy of perusal by all who are interested in the progress of organized and scientific medicine, and the Publication Committee and Editor express their thanks for the generous coöperation given by county secretaries who have contributed to the survey.

CALIFORNIA INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT COMMISSION RESOLUTION OF OCTOBER 16, 1940, MAY HAVE WIDE RAMIFICATIONS FOR PHYSICIANS AND HOSPITALS

Resolution and Correspondence Should Be Read.—Members of the California Medical Association may well take the time to read the Resolution adopted on October 16, 1940, by the California Industrial Accident Commission, which appears, with related correspondence in this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. (See page 273.)

W. F. Beem's letter of November 15, 1940 (Item VI in this series, as printed), states that the resolution will not be literally enforced. However, the resolution still stands; and its phraseology and implications, which make it a menace to property rights and confidential or privileged physician-patient relationship, are presumably violations of the Constitution of California and to court decisions relative to the same.

In reading the resolution and correspondence, physicians have a just right to query the action taken by the Commission, as indicated in the resolution, and also in the interview quoted from the San Francisco Recorder—a publication primarily for circulation to members of the legal profession—in which Chairman George G. Kidwell of

the State Industrial Accident Commission comments on the scope and nature of the Commission's actions. (See Item II, on page 274.)

* * *

Resolution May Make for an Increase in Malpractice Cases.—It is important to keep in mind that if this resolution remains among the rules of procedure and practice of a state body, such as the California Industrial Accident Commission—a rule practically permitting attorneys or representatives of industrial patients to have preliminary access to records of physicians and hospitals before hearings are held—it may soon be cited and accepted as standard practice by one or more courts in which malpractice cases of a civil nature are being heard. It needs no great imagination to conceive how similar court decisions in civil cases in private practice may lead to malpractice suits without end.

It is generally agreed that statutes or rules that cannot be or are not enforced are better off than on the statute or other books; and this opinion should apply to a quasi-judicial body such as the State Industrial Accident Commission.

Members of the California Medical Association will find the resolution and correspondence of special interest.

PRINTED REPORTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Comments on Massachusetts and California Health Reports.—Receipt recently of the Annual Report of the Department of Public Health of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the year ending November 30, 1939—containing 289 pages—led to an inspection of the last printed report of the Department of Public Health of California—that for the fiscal years from July 1, 1936 to June, 1938. California in this, its thirty-fifth biennial report, needed only 275 pages to portray its activities, or 138 pages for a single year, in contrast to the 289 pages in the Massachusetts report, although California exceeds Massachusetts in population by more than two million persons. In density, true, Massachusetts had an approximate population of 528 persons per square mile to California's 36.*

The reports of the two state departments should be of special interest because Massachusetts and California were the first commonwealths to establish, in 1870, state health departments, the Massachusetts statute for establishment antedating that of California by only a few months.†

* * *

Postgraduate Courses in Massachusetts Receive Federal Aid.—An item, also of added interest in the Massachusetts report, is the notation of a federal grant-in-aid, in 1939, of \$7,634 for "postgraduate instruction," concerning which the following was stated:

"(a) *Postgraduate Courses for Physicians.*—The Department again coöperated with the Massachusetts Medical Society in providing postgraduate courses for physicians.

* United States Census figures for 1940, since released, give 6,907,378 as California's population, and 4,316,721 as population of Massachusetts.

† For historical references in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, see issue of January, 1940, page 2.